



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Restrain Yourself

Click It or Ticket Campaign – May 18-31, 2015

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[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Any time you get behind the wheel of a motor vehicle, you're at risk for a serious injury or death. To improve your chances of surviving a car crash, wear a seat belt.

Dr. Gwen Bergen is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of always wearing seat belts in motor vehicles. Welcome to the show, Gwen.

[Dr. Bergen] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Gwen, how many people are killed or seriously injured in motor-vehicle crashes each year in the U.S.?

[Dr. Bergen] Approximately 21,000 drivers and passengers are killed each year. Another 2.4 million are treated in the emergency room for motor vehicle crash injuries.

[Dr. Gaynes] Are deaths from motor vehicle crashes more common in any particular age group?

[Dr. Bergen] Motor vehicle crash deaths are more common in young adults. Those are adults aged about 21 to 34. And we know this group is less likely to wear seat belts and are more likely to drink and drive.

[Dr. Gaynes] How effective are seat belts in preventing serious injury and death?

[Dr. Bergen] Seat belts reduce the risk of a serious injury or death in a crash by approximately 50 percent.

[Dr. Gaynes] Do you have any estimates of the percentage of drivers who actually wear seat belts?

[Dr. Bergen] We know that about 85 percent of all adults wear seat belts in the front seat of the car. When we look at the fatalities, approximately half of the people who die in crashes are not wearing their seat belt, and we know that adults are less likely to wear their seat belt in the rear seat of the vehicle.

[Dr. Gaynes] Gwen, how many states require safety belt use, and how effective have the laws been at increasing seat belt use?

[Dr. Bergen] New Hampshire is the only state that does not require seat belt use. There are two kinds of laws in the states—primary seat belt laws and secondary seat belt laws. With a primary seat belt law, a police officer can ticket you for not wearing a seat belt, even if you're not doing anything else. With a secondary seat belt law, the policeman can only ticket you for not wearing a seat belt if he or she has stopped you for something else, such as speeding. And we do know that seat belt laws, especially primary seat belt laws, are effective in getting people to buckle up and use their seat belt.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where can listeners get more information about seat belt use?

[Dr. Bergen] Listeners can get more information at cdc.gov/motorvehicleinjury, and “motorvehicleinjury” is all one word.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Gwen. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Gwen Bergen about the importance of always wearing seat belts in motor vehicles.

Remember, wearing seat belts is not only the smart thing to do, in most states, it's the law. To reduce your chances of serious injury and even death, and to avoid a potential fine, buckle up every time you're in a motor vehicle. Every trip, every seat. Until next time, be well.

This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.